

A
FRIENDLY CALL

To the PEOPLE of the
Roman Catholick Religion

I N

I R E L A N D.

A.

S E R M O N

Preached at the Parish-Church of

St. BRIDGET's, DUBLIN,
On Sunday, the 23d. of October, 1757.

With a Dedication to the RIGHT HONOURABLE,
JAMES, Earl of CLANBRASSILL,

C O N T A I N I N G

Some Remarks on Heads of a Bill, now before the
Lords, for a REGISTER of POPISH-PRIESTS.

By JOHN BRETT, D. D.

D^r U B L I N:

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A
FRIENDLY CAVE

To the Memory of his
Royal Catholic Majesty

IN
K A D A Y

M A M O N

D U B L I N
O C T O B E R 1772
BY JAMES HANNAH
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR





To the **RIGHT HONOURABLE**
J A M E S,
EARL OF

CLANBRASSILL.

My **L O R D,**


Y writing to you at this Time, I
mean not to pay you any flattering
Compliment: Your Virtue I know
would deserve it, but your good
Sense would not bear it; what I in-
tend, is only to offer to the Public
some Remarks upon the Subject of the follow-
ing Discourse, composed, I imagine, in the true
Spirit of Christianity, and calculated to give Aid
to the Scheme you are upon.

In the Form your Bill now appears, from the Pains you have taken to rid it of all the material Objections that were formerly made to it, we are reasonably to presume, that no one whose Voice is of any Significance, will rise up to oppose it; the Condition we are in, growing daily from bad to worse, calls loudly for some Method or other to weed out those pestilent Tares which choke all the good Seed sown; and the more so, that every Thing which hath hitherto been tried, hath proved ineffectual. Miracles from Heaven to interpose in our Behalf, we are not to expect; if such Interpositions were upon any Account to be hoped for, I doubt whether we are good enough to deserve them; either therefore we mean to go to Perdition, or we will try what you have proposed.

This little Island, is the only Corner of Europe, in which, my Lord, I imagine, it can be said, that the cool Methods of Law and Reason had any Share in bringing on, or much in forwarding the Reformation: In all other Parts, it made a Way for itself, by a Spirit of Enthusiasm; which gives the Reason, why its Progress quick and surprisingly rapid in some, hath here been so slow: The same Spirit I know, getting Vent, and let loose, might even now, as heretofore, be still an Overmatch for Popery, arrest its Progress, and controul every Power that supports it: But as we well know, from what Quarter that Wind must blow, and that rising to the Height necessary to effectuate the Purpose, there is no Likelihood that it would bring with it, or after it, any such Order and Discipline, as a wise Man would chuse to live under; it is better I conceive

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ceive to avoid tampering in that Way, and to go on as we have begun : If it do not carry us forward so fast, or irresistably, because every Method of Policy is liable to be countermined, and consequently to be defeated by another ; yet the Hazard of losing the good Things we already possess, of having them fraudulently stolen, or violently snatched from us, is undoubtedly less in the Way we are going.

In the Light in which your Scheme appears to me, the Interruptions it may meet with, will arise either from the Unwillingness of Papists to submit to it, or from the Remissness and Languor of Protestants to carry it into Execution : One will operate most at first setting out, but will probably abate, as the Thing goes on : The other I fear may attend it thro' every Stage of its Progress.

Among the first, a general Alarm hath, I find, already been given, and Ways are contriving to prevent this Bill from passing into a Law : Whereunto their Hopes are pointed, on whom or on what they depend, I know not ; but it is proper to warn them, what the Consequences of such a Measure may be ; that it will only expose them to a just Resentment, that may draw upon them much greater Severity : They are to consider, and it is kind to call upon them to consider it, that this Scheme is calculated to do them Service, to better their State, to make them first useful and safe, and afterwards easy and happy : Their Wisdom therefore will be to co-operate and help it on ; by acting thus, they may be intitled to greater Indulgence and more Favour ; by a perverse Opposition, what they have to look for is only

only more Oppression, and greater Restraint : In Attempts of this Kind, they have formerly, it is true, too well succeeded, and this perhaps it is, that tempts them to try it again ; but the Season and Circumstances, Abroad and at Home, are very different, and none very promising to flatter their Hopes : The very Condition and Character of our Chief Governor, if no more were in the Way, may tell them, that they are idle and vain : He would not, I imagine, endure to be so treated, to have any Thing that passed here with his Concurrence and Approbation, defeated by any clandestine Measures of theirs ; from such Fears we are effectually secured, by the Respect, we know, he will always bear, as well to our Interest as to his own Character.

Be this, my Lord, as it may, what I chiefly fear, is not so much the Opposition of Enemies, as the Indisposition and Remissness of Friends. A Fear of the first, would imply such Weakness in the Government, as is not to be supposed ; if we are hearty and resolved, we can never want Power to carry it into Execution : For as soon as the Law is passed, every necessary Method will be adviseable, and the Government that will suffer itself to be controuled or insulted, in the Execution of it's own Laws, deserves it.

But my Fears of the other, are, I doubt, but too well grounded ; for to me it looks as if some People had already resolved to have no Hand in it, from the Manner in which they are pleased to reason against it.

People I find in Opinion, that the Indulgence given to ROMAN CATHOLICS by this Bill is too great :

great : It is, in their Sense, not only a legal Toleration, but in a manner a kind of Civil Establishment of the Popish Religion, and this they are afraid will make them more insolent, and less obedient to the Laws than they were before.

As to what is implied in the latter Part of the Objection, it cannot, I would think, be the Sense or Language of any one, who hath read over the Bill. But that it is a Kind of Legal Toleration I grant : And this to me is one excellent and forcible Reason for helping it on. To such I would chuse to reply, as we do to Papists, *they know not what manner of Spirit they are of*: For I defy any Man to assign a Reason for denying to Papists the free Exercise of their Religion, by which they would not be justified for denying it to us, where-ever the Power is in their Hands.

But if a Toleration be all that is intended, where is the necessity for this Law ? They have that already, by Connivance. It is true ; and this being so, makes the Law adviseable, tho' no more could be urged in it's Favour : Why ? because a Toleration by Law implies, that we are right, that we think ourselves so, that we are acting upon Principle, and mean to do good to ourselves and to them : Whereas a Toleration by Connivance implies, that heretofore we had acted wrong, that we had dealed hardly by these People, that our Passions and Prejudices had carried us too far ; in Fact, that our Laws were unjust : So that upon this Footing, the Question will only be, whether it is best to act honestly and openly, in a Way we know to be right, and can always avow, or in a Way that we may sometimes be obliged to disown, and often to recede from. Hence my Lord, I take it,

it, the Reasoning is so strong in it's Favour, that the best, perhaps only Reason that can be given, why it hath been reserved so long to do Honour to Your Lordship's Virtue and good Sense, is, that no one before had ever seriously thought of the Matter, had been able so to unwind himself from his own private Prejudices, his Passions and Interests, as to be attentive to publick Welfare.

But whatever some Protestants may think of it, Papists I doubt will be in Opinion, that the Toleration given by this Bill is still too little; and the Certainty of this methinks, should be a Motivé to every Protestant, not only to help it on, but by some prudent Mean, when it comes into the Committee to make it yet more palatable. A Rent in the Coat, they will think as bad as taking away the whole, not a Tag or a Fringe will they part with if they can help it; they must have all their Fopperies and Fooleries, or they will think themselves ill-treated: and here the Difficulty will be to convince them that they are wrong; that by cramping and restraining them in some Things we neither intend nor do them any Injury; for tho' these are no parts of Religion, and even theirs may subsist without them, by long Use they are grown fond of them, and will probably, too many of them reckon that upon retaining of them, the very Life and Existence of it depends.

Could these poor People (for pitifully Poor and Blind and Naked, the generality of them are) be brought to think and to reflect, to follow the Divine Instruction, *to try the Spirits whether they be of God*, to compare the salutary saving Doctrines of our Church, with the Idle Superstitions and Absurdities of their own, the Prospect of reclaiming them

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them would not be so distant, as by their Backwardness and Obstinacy it is : But whether they will bear, or whether they will forbear, we are right to remind them, that by this necessary Measure, we act in no respect, contrary to the Spirit of our own Religion, tender and indulgent as it is ; for as a Sect differing from the established Religion, though the Purity of their Faith and Worship were greater than it is, all that they can justly claim, all that they have a Right to expect, is the Privilege of assembling to Worship in their own Way ; to be allowed Places and Priests for religious Offices, and that one and the other, as long as their Behaviour is peaceable and proper, shall be unmolested and safe.

Allowing them a Succession of Priests, and not allowing them at the same Time Bishops, a competent Number to keep up the Succession, may be thought a Hardship, and perhaps a Defect in the Bill : Because it is of the Essence of their Religion, and the want of them may put them under Inconveniences intolerable in their Way ; having no Seminaries here for the Education of Priests, the Supplies must come from Abroad, and may, it is true, be ordained there ; but as they are precluded from coming till the Vacancy happens, where the Distance is so great, the Intermission by Delay may be longer than is reasonable. Whether public Wisdom may think fit to alter this, I cannot say, but this is properly mentioned in Answer to such, as think allowing a Succession, in any way, an Objection to the Bill, and the Objection, I own, is of such a Nature, as to raise Surprise, but hardly to deserve any Answer : But as to the Papists, they are to be told, that an indefinite Number of Priests of certain Orders, In-

DEDICATION.

stitutions, Habits, and Names, is no Part of Religion at all, not necessary in any, of modern Date ; the corrupt Additions of later Times, which Christianity hath nothing to say to, oppressive to their own Flocks, and Snares to ours, and that if they will go on, hardning themselves, and deluding the People, what we have to do, is to look to ourselves, and with united Vigour, to press forward to the Point in View, upon the Plan you have proposed ; to undo these heavy Burdens, to let these Oppressed go free, is an act of Kindness and Charity ; and I have no doubt, if this laudable Scheme can be carried into Execution, but that the Bulk of the poor People, now smarting and groaning under this galling Yoke of Servitude, will in a little Time, thank their Benefactors for ridding them of it, and that I shall live to hear them gratefully acknowledging their Obligations to you their Deliverer, celebrating your Name for this Act of Grace, extolling the Wisdom that contrived it, the good Heart from whence it flowed, the fine manly Sense, good Temper and Equanimity with which it was conducted.

Let us talk and object, my Lord, as we will, till *this Cord is untwisted*, by which we and they draw contrary Ways, till we can get rid of these Seducers, these Incendiaries and Fosterers of Sedition, the Fryars and Regulars, it is idle to think that we shall ever be able to master that Spirit, which alienates and keeps them at a Distance : Then, and not till then, our Tenderness and Charity will operate to Effect. Till then, even our Charter-Schools, so pious and laudable in their Design, will I fear have but little Effect. Some Good they have done, and more I trust in God they will do, but at best, they are but a slow Remedy, and liable

ble to be defeated by many Contingencies ; and I may be excused for observing, what I know to be true, that the Papists laugh and make Sport of them. The Pains taken on our Side to give them Success, have awakened great Diligence on the other to prevent it, and whether the Odds, since their Commencement, of Loss on one, or Gain on the other, be yet in our Favour, I have much Reason to doubt ; when we are told of so many Children annually educated and sent out to Apprenticeships, we are apt to reckon that it is greatly in ours, without recollecting that there is a large Draw-back on the other : One Head of a Family gained to them, such Shoals go along with them, will make up for a Dozen in our Way ; and it is remarkable, that their Pains are spent mostly on the Adult, who once proselyted never revert ; they have Ways too, to lead captive silly Women, that the Teachers of Truth despise and can never digest ; and many of these Children, by falling, after they are out of our Care, into the Way of their Relations and Priests frequently relapse. Besides, my Lord, as Things now stand, the established Clergy, by the Inequality of their Numbers, are not Matches for them, nor ever will, till their Churches are rebuilt, and they have Houses to live in ; till this is done, whatever Expence we are at, we shall too probably find that we are throwing it away ; then indeed having more Power, more Wealth, and more Knowledge, the Opportunities of awing some, and winning upon others, will render them inexcusable, if, instead of losing any committed to their Trust, they do not gain some.

In fine, my Lord, as often as I consider the Scheme now before us, either in a religious, or a political

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political View, I own myself exceedingly in love with it ; It is Noble, and it is Rational, and I beseech Almighty God to give it Aid, and to prosper it : I have no way of promoting it, but by Reason, and by Argument, and affectionate Address, in which way, I have here thrown in my Mite into the common Treasury, and hope to be excused : Whether there is any Thing in it, that may recommend it to your Notice, I presume not to say ; but sure I am that there is something in it, that deserves theirs, the Roman Catholicks, and if read and considered by them, might do them much Good : My Reason for addressing it to you, besides others that are obvious, was to testify the Respect I have for your Person, and the Desire I have to live in your Esteem ; the many agreeable Specimens you have given of great Powers of Understanding, and a generous disinterested Intent to do Good to your Country, and to Mankind, deserve higher Encomiums, a Tribute more honorary than I have Ability to pay : What is offered if favourably accepted, will do Honour to your Lordship's

Most Obedient

And Devoted Servant,

Dublin, Nov. 4th,

1757.



JOHN BRETT.



A

Friendly Call, &c.

REV. xviii. 4.

And I heard another Voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of Her my People, that Ye be not Partakers of Her Sins, and that Ye receive not of Her Plagues.



E have a Direction of the same Kind, with little difference of Expression in the 2d. Epistle of *Paul* to the *Corinthians*. But I have made choice of this Text; because, the best Expositors, are agreed that the political Body or Person described in this and the foregoing Chapter, from which the People of God are here commanded to separate, is the Church of *Rome* in her corrupt Antichristian *State:

And

* Our Modern *Hutchinsonians*, are very angry with the Reformed for applying what is said in the Scriptures about Antichrist, &c. to the Pope, &c. for this Reason, that hereby our Reconciliation with the Church of *Rome* is rendered impracticable: without observing that no sincere Protestant, I believe,

B

will

And if Expositors had not remarked this, the spiritual Tyranny erected by the Popes is so plainly described in the Prophecies of the new Testament, that he would be justly suspected of secretly favouring the Popish Religion, who after attentively reading them, would scruple to write Mystery over the Triple Crown, and pronounce him who wears it to be the Man of Sin.

What is intended here by receiving of her Plagues, is not so clear: The Word so translated signifies Stripes or Chastisement, and in Scripture the Punishments inflicted for Sin, are often called Plagues: But whether as some Commentators think, they have been already inflicted, or are still reserved in the Counsel and Decree of God for her; I confess myself in the dark: That she hath been the Spring of so many Plagues to the World, particularly to those who refuse to partake in her Sins, as to make it justifiable, and Duty in every one to seperate from her, and to exhort others to do the same, we well know: The single Instance which this Anniversary is designed to recal to our Memory, (tho' numberless others, equally affecting; from the Histories of the last ten or twelve Centuries might be produced) witnesseth for the Truth of this Observation: For it is one that can never be reconciled to any Principle of Humanity or Religion, and such as could have arisen only from the foulest Abuse and Corruption of both.

It

will ever wish or endeavour a Reconciliation upon the Terms they have proposed, which is by giving up the Scripture of the New Testament following Tradition, &c. I shall only say, that if Protestants are mistaken or have done wrong in this, It is their's the *Hutchinsonian*'s Busines, by a clear, and proper Explanation of the Prophecies, to shew, to what other Person, Power or Body politick, they belong, and ought to be applied: for if the Sense of them given by Protestants, be not the true one, I, for my Part, know not what it is, and must contentedly rest in that generally received, till I find a better: whenever they are pleased to give us a different Exposition, Men of Learning will undoubtedly give it the Attention it deserves.

It is a disagreeable Observation if it be true, that, Notwithstanding the Shocks it has received, and the glaring Obligations that every other Power on Earth is under to oppose and suppress it : Yet that the Interests of this Kingdom of Darkness, are rather advancing and thriving, than dwindling or going to Decay, and even in these Kingdoms gathering Strength, by a gradual Increase in the Numbers of it's Votaries : Hence too, another Observation still more affecting arises ; viz. That whilst the Number of Papists is so great, the Rights and Interest of Protestants can never be secure : Because every Papist is in Fact the Slave of the Pope, and for that Reason can never be a safe Subject to any Protestant Prince : By owning Subjection to a foreign Power, they implicitly renounce Allegiance to the Government under which they live, and where the Subjection owned, is a Subjection of Conscience (the Spring of all Obedience) there can be little Reason to hope that the natural rightful Master shall be heard, and obeyed : In Cases where the other is pleased to call off, and give contrary Orders, he can have no equal Hold : For at the same Time that the others controuls them by stronger Terrors, So he claims a Power of absolving them from contrary Obligations ; neither Nature nor Compact can bind, when he is disposed to cancel : And he who is once persuaded, that the Pope, or any other Creature is vested with such Power, hath thenceforward one Master, whom he knows, he will, and must obey in Preference and Contradistinction to all others, and is a Fool if he afterwards think of any Power or Privilege inhering in himself.

To be tied by Conscience to act one Way, and drawn by Interest to act another : To be so blind as never to see where that Interest lies, and so perverse as never to abuse it. To be awed at all Times from seeking better Information, and by that Awe dragged contrary to every natural, and social Obligation ; is a State of Wretchedness, that no other People upon Earth, except the Natives of this Kingdom, either are or perhaps can be subject to.

Whoever considers them in this View, will unavoidably feel some Distraction from disagreeing Passions and Motives ; sometimes Resentment will fill his Breast, and justifiable Prudence prescribe Severity and great Restraints : At others, Compassion will take Place, and Charity advise more Tenderness, than perhaps may be consistent with Self-Preservation. Past Practices, will justify almost any Harshness in our Treatment of them ; and the Hope of reclaiming them to a better Sense, persuade to new Trials by Gentleness and Indulgence : In one Way we are in Danger of violating the Precepts of Religion, and the Principles of Nature, and in the other of losing the choicest temporal Blessings and Privileges we have.

These, I say, are perplexing Considerations, but leaving them for the present, let us attend to the Instruction of my Text, to learn what that requires of us.

This may be thought to lie within a very small Compass, because no more is expressed than simply to depart from the Communion of this antichristian Church. But as by every Rule of reasonable Interpretation, he that prescribes the End is supposed to prescribe the Means, we must of Necessity infer that every rational Method of securing and perpetuating that End was intended.

Let us then consider, what was most likely the End intended by the Divine Wisdom in this Command, for what is mentioned in the Text, I apprehend is not so much the End, as the Reason or Motive to excite and carry us on to the Execution of it.

Now this can be none other than what St. Paul tells us, *Tit. ii.* was the End of the whole Christian Dispensation, *viz. to redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself, a peculiar People zealous of good Works.* But this is an End which bare departing from the Communion of an idolatrous Church cannot secure : It is indeed a good

good Beginning, and one very useful Step gained; and yet a single Person, or any collective Body of Christians may do this, and yet retain a great deal of that, from which they ought to purge and purify themselves; they may bring with them stained and spotted Garments, Opinions and Customs, such as may in a great Measure defeat the Purposes of their Separation; may give those from whom they have separated great Advantages against them in all future Controversies about the Objects of Faith, and Modes of Worship, and many plausible Topics of Persuasion to harden others against Conversion; to charge them with humourous Pride, and differing only for differing Sake; with holding out Pretences which they are not able to make good, or do not believe, or are careless about. There are many Instances, in which this may happen; as when some corrupt Practices are disclaimed, and pleaded as the justifiable Causes of Separation, if the Principle upon which they were at first introduced, and have ever since been successfully maintained is still kept up and adhered to; in that Case the Evidence that the Party is sincere will not be so clear and satisfactory as might be wished: Strong Suspicions will arise, that a Zeal for Godliness, an Attachment to Truth and Virtue were not the governing Principles, or disposing Motives; that their Quarrel is not so much at the Thing, as at the Hands it is in, that they themselves would do the same Things, and have Pleasure in them.

To come up to the Intendment therefore of this Command, we must not as St. Paul prescribes in the Parallel Place, *so much as touch the unclean Thing, but put it quite away from among us*, i. e. not only forsake every Thing that is idolatrous and superstitious in itself, but likewise every Thing that looks like it, or may lead that Way, that hath heretofore been the Cause of it, or may again bring us back to it. The Rule here is the same as in all other Cases; where a Disease is once removed, the Thing principally to be consulted is, to put the Constitution into such a State as will most likely prevent the Patients Relapse, and the same Distempers in any Degree

gree from returning upon him ; of which there never can be any full and satisfying Security, whilst any of the old Habit remains : If there be ever so little of it left, it will by insinuating and mixing with the Juices, in Time sour and corrupt the whole Mass, and in Cases of Relapse, Diseases are commonly so inveterate as to be irremediable.

When I talk of altering the whole Habit, I do not mean that Things become unlawful, merely, because they were before allowed, or enjoyed by a Popish and Idolatrous Church. Even such an one might have some Rites, which it might be safe and prudent to retain. This would be too much in the Way of the Jesuit, who interpreting a Passage of Scripture, refused to take that Sense which he acknowledged to be the true one, because *Calvin* had avowed it, for his : But this I may and do say, that whatever hath been the Mean of Superstition heretofore, hath been abused to superstitious Use, and for it's Subserviency in that Way hath been in much Esteem and Veneration among them, may not safely, can hardly innocently be retained, because, tho' the wile and considerate, knowing the exa& Limits of right and wrong, where and when to stop, may avoid Superstition in the Use of it, yet such Things are Snakes to weak Minds, who from admiring are too easily led to adoring, but when they have been once carried so far, are never, or with great Difficulty afterwards to be recovered or brought back.

But the principal Head of Inquiry in such Case should be : What is the true Spring, and Support of Popery ? What is that, which first gave Rise and Being to all their false Doctrines and Practices, and by which they are still supported and propagated ? What is it also that makes Popery that dangerous and dreadful Thing it is ? For, whatever these are, there the Axe should be laid, and never ceasing Labour applied till every Fibre of them is plucked away ; and that for these two especial Reasons :

t. That

1. That if any of it is left, it may hereafter spring up to a new Harvest, and choak all the good Seed sown.

2. Because in many Cases, a Man by admitting the Principle, cannot consistently disallow the Conclusion drawn from it, but may be driven to very awkward Shifts to defend himself.

Allow me to enlarge a little for the Illustration of both.

1. If any of it is left, it may hereafter spring up to a new Harvest. It may: But what Likelihood is there that it will? Much, on many Accounts, especially if they who ought to watch their Motions, are inattentive, careless and secure; because they are ever assiduous and busy, and cease not to labour and sow, even where there is no present Prospect of reaping.

It is true they sow nothing but Tares, and if the Defenders of Truth and Error, were to set out together, and keep equal Pace, and each to use none but honest and direct Arts; the former would always maintain a greater Party in the World, because in general the Evidences of Truth lie more easy and open to the Understanding: But this is what they never do, the latter knowing what their Cause requires, either by pressing on more eagerly, or by taking short Cuts and bye Roads, which the other despise, are generally sure to outstrip them.

Besides, they who agree with them in the fundamental Principles of their Hierarchy, are so many Instruments fitted and prepared to carry forward their Scheme and give it Success; if a favourable Opportunity presented, they are in a proper Posture to revert to them; The Gulph between them is neither so broad, nor deep, but that they may pass the one to the other; so they judge and so I think. It is at present, one Topic whereby

whereby they persuade and confirm the wavering and unstable in their own Communion, and doubtless would be urged on Occasion with great Energy to proselyte and bring over others.

This may not be seen, indeed may not be adverted to, when Favour and Power and large Possessions are on the Side of Truth. But if by any untoward Chance, these should happen to change Sides, and draw the contrary Way ; there is little that I see to keep some Men from going along : I know Men will sometimes strain at a Gnat, tho' they have before swallowed a Camel ; but I do not think it is Conscience that makes them so squeamish, and if the Matter came once to this, that the only Difficulty was whether they should pay implicit Faith to the Pope at *Rome*, or a Consistory of Presbyters at *Geneva*, a few Pounds Troy Weight, I dare say, would quickly decide and cast the Ballance. For,

2. He who admits the Principle can seldom with any Consistency disallow the Conclusion ; or if he do, must be driven to very awkward Shifts to defend himself.

V. G. If I once admit that any Set of Men have a Right to judge in Controversies of Faith, to make authoritative Interpretations of Scripture, and to exact Faith and Conformity from all the Members of Christ's Body, I must afterwards with a very ill Grace oppose any Particularities imposed by them : TRANSUBSTANTIATION, absurd and shocking as it is, would go easily down, because having renounced, or vanquished my Reason in the 1st. Instance, it would be Folly and Phrensy to examine or dispute any subsequent Proposition they might offer.

I have instanced in this Particular, because it is the very Root from which Popery sprang, which having discovered, we have in a Manner found all that we have been searching for, and measured almost the Line of that Duty which the Text prescribes. There have indeed been two Articles besides introduced, as subsidiary to this

this, which add Strength and Firmness to their Building, and which, if not removed, will for ever keep it from tumbling, *viz.*

1. An high Respect and Veneration for Antiquity.
2. A Power of Miracles for several successive Ages in the Church.

From each they have drawn very considerable Advantages, and been able to raise their Building to a Height, that even the warmest Imagination could not have reached at first setting out.

The 1st. * as a learned Prelate observes, *would have prevented all Reformation where it is, and hath set an invincible Barrier against it, where it is not.* For the Reason already assigned, that he who admits it, obliges himself thenceforward to give up his Reason and Senses, and argue no more. And good Reason why! Because by this a Papist, if he knows what he is about, can prove any Thing and every Thing. Let the Question be about Reliques, Invocation of Saints, Worship of Images, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Prayers for the Dead; they bear all the Stamp of Antiquity, and come down to us consecrated and recommended by very venerable Names. He will produce a *Tertullian* or *Cyprian* to vouch for some of them, a *Cbrystostom*, *Austin* or *Jerom*, to vouch for them all. A Man therefore acts very imprudently, who puts his Cause to be tried by an Issue, where the Jurors have already declared to one Side, and is thence sure that the Verdict will be against him: What then is to be done? Or how are we to deal with them? Why thus! admit of no Umpire but Scripture and Reason. Scripture, for the Rule of Faith; and Reason, for the Arbitrator of Usages: Never trouble your Heads with inquiring or determining, how early, or how long such Doctrines or Customs obtained, by how many or how great Names recommended or practised, but bring them all to this fair Test; have they

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the

¶ Dr. Hoadly, Bishop of Winchester;

the Sanction of a divine Command? Are they fit and proper, and expedient? and then you will be sure to stand your Ground, and baffle and foil them in every Controversy.

The 2. viz. a Power of Miracles for several successive Ages in the Church. Tho' they have made a gainful Traffick by it, is, in the Way they have managed it, the greatest Blunder in their whole Scheme; for pretending that this Power still continues among them, they expose the Fallacy of the whole to any one that will keep his Eyes open, and at all observe what they are doing.

When this Power really ceased, may not be very easy to determine; the Pretences to it have been so confidently kept up thro' every Age, but it is shameful Impudence to say it still subsists. At sometimes if you will believe Chrysostom, Ambrose, or Austin, it had ceased long before their Time; and yet anon they will talk of it's being renewed and restored in their Days, and you have the last named in particular, giving Orders to have Bills made of such Miracles as were really wrought, and in a celebrated Piece tells you of several that were wrought to his own Knowledge: * The Papists indeed, as if they believed the Deceit to be too gross to pass currently, have qualified it a little, by transferring the Power from Persons to Things, whence it is that even by their own Reports, from the Beginning of the 4th Century down, the Miracles are all wrought by some Relique or Trumpery; such as consecrated Oil, the Sign of the Cross, or the Bones or Blood of Martyrs, at their Shrines and Tombs, where it was usual to make their Prayers and Offerings.

Now see, to what a Dilemma a Man may be driven, by consenting to take the Authority of the Writers of those Ages, either for Doctrines or Facts: If I rest upon their Credit at all, I must believe that such and such Miracles

* For what is here said the Reader, if he please, may consult Chrysost. orat. cont. Gent. Ambr. Ep. ad Sos. Marcell. Augustin de Civit. Dei. 22. cap. 8.

racles were really wrought, for they Vouch them to me ; and if I receive the Miracles, with what Face can I refuse to receive those Customs, Doctrines, and Usages, which the Miracles were introduced to confirm ? Can I Subscribe to the first, and with any Propriety, refuse my Suffrage to the last ? Must not a Conduct so unaccountable if I do, impair my Credit, and raise Suspicions to the Disadvantage of my Cause ? Will it not be Occasion of Triumph to Papists and Derision to Infidels ? And under such Circumstances, can I hope to convince the One, or reform the Other ? Do I then deal ingenuously, and act honestly, and can I say with Comfort to my own Conscience, that I have fulfilled the Commandment of the Lord, have cleansed my Heart, and washed my Garments, got out of the reach of Infection, and Hazard of Relapse, and others may safely go along and bear me Company ?

But, neither is this all : For I told you of another Inquiry that is to be made : viz. " What is that " which makes Popery that dreadful Thing it " is ?

And this will include a third Particular, which will both compleat the Design of this Discourse and put an End to it.

Viz. How after separating from the Communion of it, we should demean ourselves to those who are unhappily still Members of it.

As to the First : The Terror of Popery consists principally in this, That it allows no Toleration to Dissenters, but claims a Right of imposing her own Faith upon every other, and of persecuting even to Death all who will not submit to receive it.

They cannot pretend that in this I charge them falsely ; but they may alledge, that every Sect hath the same to answer for in some Degree : That it is what they have all done in their Turns, as often as they had Power and Opportunity, and have sometimes foolishly shewn a

Propensity to it when they had it not in their Power: That it is an Evil (if it be one) which attended Christianity before Popery had its Establishment, and hath seldom failed to follow the Successes and Triumphs of every Party.

How this is to be accounted for: Whether from the Lust of Dominion, inseparable (as some think) from human Nature; or whether it be the Off-spring of civil Tyranny (as others imagine more justly) grafted on Nature and improved by Art; or the Effect of a Dogmatick Theology inspiring a strong Aversion to Falshood, and that Aversion cherished by Piety, giving Birth to a blind, ungovernable Zeal, that always dictates Compulsion, when Argument fails: Whether to one or all of these Causes it is owing, I am not engaged to determine: What it behoves me most to observe and insist upon is; that even if the Allegation were true, it is a bad Apology; because my Guilt is nevertheless for another's having done the same; and (2.) that tho' all may have sinned, yet none in the Degeee that she hath, none have ever carried the Principle of Intolerance so far, or so high: *None bath ever exalted herself so far above her Fellows, nor been so often drunk with the Blood of the Saints: She bath made War with the Saints and overcome them; and as many as would not worship the Image of the Beast she bath killed.*

This Dissociability, this dogmatizing, cruel, enslaving Principle, is that which makes Popery so very dreadful; but for this, all her other Errors, the Foppery and Folly of her Worship, the Absurdity and Nonsense of her Doctrines, altogether, would call not for Resentment but Compassion; for where I am in no Danger of being hurt, I have no Reason to quarrel; and if another is so foolish as to bend his Knee, or bow the Head to an Image, to worship a Crucifix, or a Bit of Bread, or to invoke a Mortal like himself for what no Mortal can do; tho' it may do much Hurt to him, it can do none to me, whilst I am free to take my own Way, and follow my own Judgment. What is it to me, that one believes a Lie, if I am free to profess the Truth? but if another, not content;

tent with the Extravagance of his own Faith, shall claim a Right of compelling Recusants, and apply for their Conversion by Fire, Racks, Faggots and Gibbets, I am thereby summoned to a necessary Self-Defence, and acquitted, if by superior Power or Art I can defeat the Malice of his Intentions.

Now this irreligious Principle is of the very Essence of Popery, and inseparable from her Constitution, as having the Sanction of all her Canons and Councils; and as by holding it avowedly, she hath in Effect declared War against all Mankind, so by that, consequentially forfeited her Pretensions to all social Privileges, and the Protection of every State where she is not the ruling Religion: In this Way of Reasoning, how the Consequence is to be got over I do not see. For undoubtedly, they who will endure no Religion but their own, instruct but too well all others, how to treat them in their Turns; as from thence all others are sure, that they can have no Hopes of Safety but in their Depression.

It is farther inforced by a Reason peculiarly respecting the State of these Kingdoms; here Papists are upon a different Footing from what they are any where else, and not to be considered in the same Relation: Here their Religion obliges them to disclaim Allegiance to their lawful Sovereign, and transfer it to a foreign Power as often as Opportunity of doing it securely shall tempt or invite them: They are subject indeed for Wrath, but never for Conscience-sake, and because all relative Obligations are reciprocal, they have for that Reason, no Title to Favour, and little to Protection. Every State is justified in guarding against the Machinations and Assaults of its Enemies; and if in the Use of such necessary Measures for Security, they find themselves oppressed or severely handled, as long as they bear that Character, they cannot complain of Wrong or Injustice, nor can it be any Resentment of the Laws of Humanity, to deny them that Indulgence which common Sense, as well as the Precepts of Christianity tell us, is the due of all others.

Tho' the Evil of their Case springs intirely out of their Religion, yet let it be remembred, that this Consequence will hold only in a political View: For as a Religious Sect, not interfering with the Government under which they live, neither the Extravagance of their Faith, or Superstition, will be an allowable Plea for barring them of any of the common Rights of Nature and Society. For though wicked Doctrines broach'd with Design, and conducted with Impiety, V. G. " That the Pope may dis-
" pense with all Oaths; that he may absolve Sub-
" jects from their Allegiance; that Faith may not be
" kept with Heretics, and that heretical Princes may be
" slain by their Subjects, if the Church Commands," are not
to be endured; yet the major Part of the present Profes-
sors may be free of that Design, and of the Impiety too.
In many Cases they may not see the Consequences of
their own Opinions, nor the Evil of their Doctrines; and
where they do not, they are not in Strictness to be charged
to them: That even where they do, Prescription is a Pre-
judice oftentimes unsurmountable; and where Prejudices
are invincible, tho' they are ill grounded and false, yet
they are not criminal. That no People upon Earth (not
the *Jews* excepted) ever lay under so many and strong
ones, so early and deeply impressed, before any dawning
of Reason appears within, and then hedged in and about
with such Art and Care.

That the surest Way to win upon them, as upon all
others, is by Mildness and Gentleness; that Rancour and
Severity, instead of removing, always harden and rivet
Prejudices; and that I can never hope to convince or per-
suade any Man, who knows by Sense and Feeling, that I
hate him; that to persecute them, is to be too like them-
selves, and gives them the same Ground of Quarrel
against us, and the strongest and most justifiable too, that
we have against them: That this is one of the principal
Matters, which makes Communion with that Church,
both unlawful and unsafe, and that no Man hath suffi-
ciently reformed, tho' he hath quit all the other Errors of
Popery, if he hold by this.

But

But then these same People are to be told, that tho' we advise Tenderness and Forbearance on religious accounts, yet that they are never to expect any Relaxation of Discipline, that is necessary for the Security of our Government ; that we are too sensible of the Advantages of our present Constitution, and the many Blessings we enjoy, under it's present Guardians and Protectors, to think of ever parting with either, that however the necessary Means of preserving these, may be irksome, inconvenient, or hurtful to them, they are warranted to us by every Maxim of Prudence and good Sense : and that most of what they feel or suffer, is to be avoided or relieved by being honest Men and good Subjects.

That they suffer many of them in their Persons, Properties, and Privileges, I admit, and must own, that Nature is ever apt to wince, and with Difficulty reconciled to Evil and Oppression : But they should consider what it is they suffer for ; let them look to the Causes of it, and see whence these Evils came upon them : They cannot be insensible that by Treason and Rebellion Men justly forfeit social Rights ; that tho' some of them may be innocent, their Fathers certainly were guilty ; and in the Course of Providence, even where human Power doth not interpose to inflict them, such Sufferings are common and sometimes unavoidable. They cannot say that any fundamental Law of Nature, or of the Constitution, was dispensed with to bring the Evil upon them ; nor can they deny that had their Schemes taken Effect, no Laws would have availed to have secured us from much greater.

Let them again reflect, that when, after violent and bloody Struggles, a Constitution hath been preserved from Ruin, there is no Way of Rewarding such as hazarded their Lives and Fortunes in its Defence, but out of the Properties of the Delinquents ; and that as the Evil is now irremediable, other very safe and laudable Methods

of

of repairing their decayed Fortunes, which lie open before them, should in Reason be tried and attempted, rather than that desperate hopeless one, first and last in all their Thoughts ; which were there a Possibility of effectuating by Force and Violence, must yet bring before them such Scenes of Blood, Confusion and Devastation, as might shock even the most resolute, and prevent a Wish of that Kind from arising in any human Breast.

These Things duly reflected upon, would undoubtedly have some Weight : For notwithstanding the malign Influence of their Religion, the Bulk of them act wrong from Mistake, rather (I charitably hope) than from Principle, and it would go a great Way to their Recovery, could they be brought to consider and reflect. They would by this see, that even were their darling Scheme accomplished, no Advantage would follow to them ; poor and wretched as they are, their Slavery would still be the same or worse ! They would change Masters, but not Conditions ; or, if some few could be profited, Experience will tell them they could be very few ! how were their suffering Fathers in like Case rewarded ? Did their Loyalty redeem their Property ? Will Circumstances in any Case of the Kind bear such Hopes ? Did not the same Hopes undo them before ? And will they be the Fools to suffer the same Trick to be play'd upon them again ? To be the Duples of Foreign Policy : The Tools of another's Ambition, who would not be able to reward them, tho' he were disposed to it, nor disposed to it, tho' he were able.

But they have their Religion to contend for. Alas ! It is the Thing of all others, least worth contending for ! Let any of them shew, what there is in it, that is good, that is not preserved in the established Forms ; from which it stands distinguished only by some superstitious Formalities superadded to the pure Doctrine of Christ, neither pleasing to God, nor useful to any, but to the Inventors, whose Instruments they are to inflave the World, and to aggrandise themselves : Doth their Salvation depend upon them ? Do such Things sanctify or make them better ? Will they bring them nearer to God, or qualify them for

for an Inheritance in Heaven? No! That nothing can do, but doing the Will of God, and keeping his Commandments.

Let them then ask themselves, or answer me, who now demand it of them, hath God commanded any of those Particularities wherein they differ from us? They cannot shew it, nor do they indeed pretend to it: Who then, I would ask them again, who thinks soberly or is at all in his Wits, would forfeit his Temporal Rights, throw away the chief Goods of this World, all the choicest Advantages of Society, for a few idle unprofitable Opinions, that here or hereafter can do him no Good. For my own Part, I must, and will say it, that were the Things harmless and innocent, as indeed they are not; was I in their Situation, I would part with them all, rather than give up any one social Privilege or Right of Nature. Why? Because I know I can go to Heaven without them, and that I shall never be questioned about the Neglect of them there: And that had I any moral Defect, or Incapacity, such as might bar my Entrance there, nothing of that Kind could supply the Defect: and then, for a Man to lose his Share of the good Things of this World, whilst he might keep them and use them with Innocency, without any Prospect of being repaid in another, is to me a very foolish Procedure.

I will not in arguing with them, tell them they cannot be saved in the Profession they are: Because I shall never make outward Forms, either the Limits or Conditions of God's Mercy: And because I do not certainly know, how far their Errors are the Effects of Ignorance, nor what Circumstances most of them may be under, which may make their Ignorance excusable: But this I will tell them, that their Profession will not save them, and that it is therefore unpardonable, foolish Obstinacy in them, to stand out and to incur present Damage and Loss, for what, can never bring in any Return of Profit or Advantage.

But they have been used to measure and estimate such Things by a different Standard, and the Difficulty is to convince them that that Standard is false: As yet it is true, Things appear to them in a different Light from what I am here representing them: but then, it is because they have really never thought of them: their understandings have never had fair Play, they have not made use of their own, but of other Men's, Men who have an Interest in blinding and deceiving them, who put out the Light, by which these Things only can be seen, and never trust them to the Guidance of their own Reason: Would they but once assert that unalienable Privilege vested in them by God, of examining and judging for themselves; would they throw off that servile Awe, which long Slavery hath brought upon their Minds, become for once their own Confessors, and ask themselves this short and easy Question, *Are these Things so?* Have Matters been fairly and equally represented? Have our Spiritual Guides been faithful and honest? Have they sought our Good or their own? Would they then try what their own Reason can say for, or against it; then turn to their Bibles, and see how far they accord and agree with one, or the other; their Trouble and our's too, would soon be over, and we might hope to unite upon one firm and solid Foundation, that would make the Church secure, the Country flourish, and the People the safest and happiest upon the Face of the Earth.

It would sound like an Excess of Charity in me, to say with St. Paul, *That I could wish myself accursed from Christ, for these my Bretbren according to the Flesh,* but I may say without a Figure, that it is a Subject of real Sorrow and Heaviness, that Creatures formed with Endowments, fit and sufficient to make them wise and happy, should pass thro' Life, come and go off the Stage, without ever spending one serious Thought about the true Methods of making them so: Regardless, deaf to every Thing that can be said to persuade them, using every Art to rivet their own Prejudices, hugging their Chains, and rejoicing in their own Blindness and Slavery.

All

All Bigots are pitiable Objects, but the most compassionate that can be presented to Human Sight, is a Papist, who is a Man of Sense. To behold a Person, in all Civil Matters, in all the ordinary Concerns of Life, displaying sound Judgment and solid Understanding, fertile of Invention, expert in Business, ingenious in contriving, and prudent in Execution: watchful against Surprise, wary of Deceit, not credulous, nor easy to be imposed upon: humane and gentle in his Temper, obliging in his Disposition, amiable in his Manners; to behold, I say, this same Creature, the Slave of a Priest, with his Understanding and Conscience both in his keeping: believing Fables and Fictions, which in any other Account he would blush to repeat, and practising Fooleries, that he would think ridiculous in a Child, and laugh at the Simplicity, which set them upon them; incurious in an Affair that regards them more than any other; never once enquiring, or thinking what he is pursuing or about; but impatient and boiling into Passion, when his Folly is ever so tenderly exposed, and ready to do any the most ill-natured and cruel Office to his Fellow Creature, whenever his Church is pleased to call upon him, to kindle up his Zeal. Such a Man to me, and such I have beheld, is a Spectacle the most moving, and such as I never can look upon, without some very uneasy Sensations, and very disagreeable Reflections.

Did their Eternal Welfare depend upon acting thus? Could they have any rational Assurance, that it would help them forward in the way of Salvation, that such Conduct could be any way pleasing to God: Yet, even so, it would be their Duty to examine and search once in their Lives into the ground of their Faith and Persuasion. The Obstinacy with which they avoid it, would even then be inexcusable: But as this is impossible, because irreconcilable with God's Being and Attributes, it behoves them to consider, how they will account and acquit themselves to him for the Neglect: How is it they conceive of God, what Kind of Being they take him to be, when they imagine he could put the Salvation of his Creatures upon any such uncertain Hazard; upon Conditions

Conditions that Millions can never have any Knowledge of: That those who have heard most of them, can never see any just Reason to accept, and they who have received them can never be the better of.

Wherfore my Brethren come out from among them, and be ye separate and touch not the unclean Thing, and I will receive You, and will be a Father unto You, and Ye shall be my Sons and my Daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty.

And for us, who have separated, let us be Examples to them in all Holiness, in Gentleness and Meekness, instructing them, if God peradventure shall give some of them Repentance, to the Acknowledgment of the Truth, that they may now, even now, see the Things that belong to their Peace, before they be hid from their Eyes: Now when the Arms of Mercy are extending wide to receive them, and their Political Parents are contriving Means to make them easy and safe; that by Perverseness and Obstinacy or any imprudent Opposition to those Means, none of them may be Hindrances of the Good intended for them, and so draw upon themselves, greater Degrees of Severity, than what they have already felt, and at present complain of.

Let us then with one Accord put up our Petitions to Heaven, to give a prosperous Issue to these good Designs; Let us pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, and may all those prosper who love her.

Now to God, &c.



F I N I S.

